



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

### GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

*Ruins of Desert Cathay: Personal Narrative of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China.* By M. AUREL STEIN. In two volumes. (London: The Macmillan Company. 1912. Pp. xxxviii, 546; xxi, 517.)

EASTERN or Chinese Turkestan has been for the past twenty-five years or so the goal of explorers and archaeologists. Russian, British Indian, Prussian, and French expeditions, starting from different points, invaded either Khotan, or the great Taklamakan Desert beyond, exploring the physical conditions of the land and excavating its ruined or buried sites. The finds of these expeditions were invariably of the highest interest. The entire country, prior to its subjugation by progressive desert sands, seems to have been a sort of triangular exchange for the civilizations of Western Asia, India, and China. Moreover Graeco-Buddhist art which had established itself in Northwestern India in the wake of Alexander's conquest, during the centuries around the Christian era, passed with Buddhism into the land of the Turks or Uigurs and there blended with Chinese art.

Prior to the Mohammedan conquest Turkestan was a hospitable country which kept its doors wide open. It must have been peculiarly unchauvinistic as to nationality and latitudinarian as to religion. Buddhists from India, Manicheans from Persia, Nestorian Christians from Syria, found there a cordial welcome: the native Khans seem to have adopted from time to time one or the other of the imported religions. Vast literary activity, in a surprising number of languages and a still more surprisingly great variety of scripts, there unfolded itself in the centuries after Christ. Manuscripts on all kind of materials, notably wooden tablets, in Turk, Uigur, Tibetan, Sanskrit and other Indian dialects, Manichean, Persian (Sogdian), Chinese, etc., were dug out entire, or in fragments. One or the other new language, notably the Tokhri or Tocharian, a new, mixed, Indo-European language, came to light. Here is the country, doubtless, in which early Christianity came in direct contact with Hinduism; the many resemblances between Christian and Buddhist belief and institutions (notably monasticism) are, at least in part, to be accounted for by mixtures in this easy flowing channel from the West to the East.

Up to the present time Turkestan discoveries were best known to the English-reading public in consequence of M. A. Stein's expedition of 1900-1901. He published a popular account of that expedition in 1903,

under the title *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan*. The same intrepid explorer started in 1906 on a two and a half-years' trip which carried him not only through the length and breadth of Chinese Turkestan, but as far east as Kan-Chou, almost in the heart of China—about 1000 miles east of Khotan. The present work contains a very complete account of this journey, abundantly illustrated by maps, photographs, and color plates, which describe excellently the country, the people, the sites, and the countless finds of manuscripts and objects of art and antiquity. Notwithstanding its great size *Ruins of Desert Cathay* is merely a preliminary report, to be followed in due time by elaborate scientific treatises by specialists in the several domains of philology and archaeology.

A brief notice of such a work, containing as it does more than 1000 pages, and modulating the theme on almost every page, is of necessity a mere suggestion. A fairly systematic digest would call for the space of an elaborate article, a task even then not to be shouldered lightly, especially because the interest of the book depends in no small degree on its very abundant illustrations.

Stein's second expedition starts from the valleys of the Indo-Afghan border, across the Hindu Kush up to the cradle of the river Oxus on the Pamir, the "Roof of the World"; then down in the great basin drained by the river Tarim. The expedition skirts and at one time crosses the Taklamakan Desert, with constant excursions to ruined or sand-buried sites. We can dwell here only on some of the chief results.

The first important find was in the rubbish deposits and stable refuse of a sand-buried town on the Niya River, abandoned since the third century A.D. Here were found hundreds of documents on wood, a kind of "wooden stationery", used for legal and governmental purposes. The documents are written every time on rectangular or wedge-form tablets, covered with lids, fastened ingeniously with a string and clay seals, so as to prevent unauthorized manipulation. Some of the tablets bear in sockets sunk into their lids two or three seals; this seems to show that they contain agreements or bonds executed before witnesses. They remind us of the Pompeian tablets, separated though they are by a distance of one-third around the earth.

The writing is one of the most ancient forms of Hindu, known as Kharoshti; the language is a form of Prākṛit, a medieval Hindu language. A frequent introductory formula: *Mahanuava Maharaya lihati*, "His Majesty the Mahārāja orders in writing", shows that the administration of this remote region was carried on in Indian language and script as late as the third century A.D. How much earlier no one knows. Most of the seals are from intaglios of classical workmanship, representing Zeus, or Heracles with club and lion's skin, or Pallas Athene with spear and aegis, just as she jumped out of the head of Jupiter—all importations of the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra.

The next more important act of the expedition concerns the Miran Fort and its treasures. It lies, deserted, about a day's journey to the

east of the town of Charklik, and is surrounded by Buddhist temples. In the fort itself were found Old Tibetan documents on wood and paper, as well as many important antiquarian objects. From a narrow passage which seems to have served as a sort of archive there emerged a large number of bundles of neatly folded paper wrapped in silk. These were Iranian documents, written in an ancient Aramaic script, spoken in Sogdiana (the region of the present Samarkand and Bokhara); they contain letters which again point to the intimate correspondence between West and East in that remote region. The Buddhist temples about Miran are replete with really wonderful wall-frescoes and remains of colossal Buddha statues in the Graeco-Buddhist style. The style of painting and sculpture, the features of the faces, and the elaborate arrangement of the draperies of the statues, again show that the painters and sculptors of the desert had derived their style through the channel of Gandhāra from far-away classical models.

Stein justly attaches much importance to his discovery and plucky exploration of the long-forgotten westernmost portion of the ancient Chinese frontier wall or *Limes*. Chinese records call it the "Barrier". After crossing the great desert on the track followed by the Venetian Marco Polo to Cathay, as well as by numerous early Chinese pilgrims to India, he came upon the line of the ancient wall with its watch-towers and forts. Following and exploring the wall for a distance of over two hundred miles he found it in a state of astonishing preservation. It was built at that point to guard the chief line of political and commercial communication with Central Asia against the raids of the Huns during the centuries immediately preceding and following the time of Christ. Adjoining one of the towers near Tun-Huang were found abundant dated records beginning with the twenty-sixth year of the emperor who founded the Eastern Han dynasty in 25 A.D. At another point there came to light many antiquarian objects dating back to the year 8 A.D.: a wooden lock with a wooden key; a foot-measure with decimal divisions, an ivory-topped baton, etc. Also a number of records on "wooden stationery" in Chinese, among them two with dates corresponding to the epoch of Christ's birth.

The most dramatic, as well as the most fruitful stage in Stein's progress to Cathay, was that which landed him at the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas", some ten miles out of Tun-Huang. A huge pile of troglodytic grottoes, hundreds in number, here honeycomb the side of a rock, some high, some low, perched one above the other without any order or arrangement in stories. Instead of having been, as might be suspected, a sort of bee-hive for Buddhist recluses, they proved one and all to have been tenanted by images of the "Enlightened One" himself. All these grottoes are shrines full of frescoes and statuary of very great archaeological and artistic interest. Stein describes and illustrates these with great care. But his real feat at the Caves lay in discovering and rifling the great Caves library. This was in charge of a pious Chinese

priest, Wang Tao-Shi, who knew enough about its value to induce him to shut it off with a brick wall. Stein cleverly played off his appreciation of the famous Chinese Buddhist pilgrim to India, Hsüan-Tsang, so as to establish a bond of sympathy between himself and Wang, by placing himself in the light of another such pious devotee and admirer of the Buddha. When he succeeded in catching the first glimpse of the library, it appeared as a solid mass of bundles of manuscripts and votive paintings on silk, rising from the floor to a height of ten feet and filling, as was found later, about five hundred cubic feet. The collection had lain buried in its rock chapel for centuries, and had been espied by Wang Tao-Shi through a crack in a closed up chamber. This Wang afterwards further fortified with a brick wall in front of the crack.

Stein's story of how he parleyed and fenced with the Tao-Shi in order to induce him first to show, and later on to put aside, "for further inspection", the most promising of the manuscripts makes very good reading indeed. In the end a sort of system of transfer precipitated itself. For seven nights Stein's own Chinese assistant, Chiang-ssu-yeh, also a scholar zealous in the same cause, came to his tent when everybody had gone to sleep, "his slight figure panting under loads which grew each time heavier, and ultimately required carriage by instalments". And with it all Stein kept the good Tao-Shi, though he was not altogether averse to bakshish, in the belief that he was really performing a pious deed from his own point of view. Stein's haul consisted of twenty-four cases of manuscripts written in Sanskrit, Central Asiatic Brahmi, Sogdian, Manichean Turkish, Runic Turkish, Uigur, Tibetan, and Chinese; also five cases of votive paintings and embroideries. One single manuscript in Brahmi writing, an hitherto unknown language, is upon a gigantic roll of paper, over seventy feet long, and a foot wide. The find at the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas" represents, perhaps, the most important single act in Turkestan exploration. It will require years to elaborate all its results for Central Asiatic history, philology, and art.

On the return voyage the expedition passed across the great mountain range of the Kun-lun into Khotan and Keriya, at a height of 20,000 feet. Here Stein had the misfortune to lose the toes of his right foot through frost-bite, and had to have himself carried, a helpless invalid, for a distance of three hundred miles. Naïvely he says, that he was comforted by the thought that he had carried out his programme, the visible results of which appeared later on in the shape of one hundred cases of antiquities which reached the British Museum in safety.

MAURICE BLOOMFIELD.

*South American Archaeology.* An Introduction to the Archaeology of the South American Continent with special Reference to the Early History of Peru. By THOMAS ATHOL JOYCE, Assistant of the British Museum. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1912. Pp. xv, 292.)